

NORTH CAROLINA

Highlights of State Council Activities

North Carolina Citizen Corps is managed by the Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. The Commission, created by Executive Order, is housed within the Governor's office and serves to foster collaboration in a statewide volunteer effort focused on homeland security, disaster preparedness and response, public health, and public safety. The State Emergency Response Commission serves as the catalyst for the State Citizen Corps Council. The Secretary of North Carolina Crime Control and Public Safety, who also serves as the state's Homeland Security Director, chairs the Commission. Some of the state agencies and organizations represented on the 18-member Commission are the Sheriffs' Association, Association of Police Chiefs, State Fire Marshal's Office, Fire Chiefs Association, Community College System, Emergency Management Association, Division of Public Health, Department of Agriculture, State Bureau of Investigation, and Office of Emergency Medical Services.

In 2005, the NC Citizen Corps office continued its ongoing effort to partner with local Citizen Corps Councils and programs, the statewide network of Volunteer Centers, the NC Emergency Management Association and the 101 local Emergency Management Coordinators, member organizations of NC Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and national service programs AmeriCorps and Senior Corps in an effort to ensure that everyone in the state is aware of the importance of personal and community preparedness.

Two major state documents were updated in 2005 to include Citizen Corps: The Volunteer and Donations Management Annex of the NC Emergency Operations Plan and the NC State Homeland Security Strategy, which now include Citizen Corps in each of the Strategy's three major goals: preparedness, response, and recovery.

In December 2005, the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety created a working team to begin the in-depth process for applying for the state's 2006 homeland security grant from the Department of Homeland Security. Citizen Corps was a member of the team, leading the state's effort for overall community preparedness.

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Public Education and Outreach

In 2005, NC Citizen Corps began a partnership with the NC Department of Crime Control and Public Safety to develop a statewide public education campaign focused on preparedness. The campaign, to be named, Ready NC, will have three main areas of focus: how to make a preparedness plan, how to build an emergency kit, and how to be involved. The NC Emergency Managers Association provides suggestions for the campaign focused on local preparedness needs.

Training and Exercises

NC Citizen Corps participated in the DHS/FEMA Catastrophic Incident Exercise in Charlotte, NC, in January. In the exercise, potential roles were identified for various Citizen Corps programs in such an event.

With the steady increase in North Carolina's Spanish-speaking population over the past several years, NC Citizen Corps conducted its first state-level bilingual CERT Train-the-Trainer class in which 25 people received instructor training. These instructors will assist in creating and training local Hispanic CERT teams in North Carolina. In addition to the bilingual CERT training, NC Citizen Corps provided other CERT Train-the-Trainer sessions at the state level.

Volunteer Programs and Support

NC Citizen Corps continued to provide technical assistance and encouragement to agencies, organizations, and communities across the state. Through a partnership with the Office of Emergency Medical Services, the number of Medical Reserve Corps units in NC doubled in 2005 as the state's four State Medical Assistance Teams registered to also serve as Medical Reserve Corps units. Citizen Corps collaborated with the NC Highway Patrol to provide assistance in creating its statewide Volunteers in Police Service program and students from local community colleges volunteered for the launch.

Support for Hurricane Katrina Response

Within the first week after Hurricane Katrina's landfall, the NC Citizen Corps Program Manager was deployed to the Louisiana State Emergency Operations Center to assist the state in establishing procedures for volunteer management. North Carolina also sent volunteers from several Medical Reserve Corps units and CERT teams to the Gulf Coast to assist with hurricane response efforts. The Manager of the Citizen Corps Program also managed the NC Helping Neighbors Fund, a relief fund created by Governor Michael Easley to provide assistance to Hurricane Katrina survivors.

National Preparedness Month

On September 1, 2005, NC Citizen Corps and the NC Department of Crime Control and Public Safety co-sponsored *Ready North Carolina*, a public education and awareness event on Bicentennial Mall in downtown Raleigh. The National Weather Service, CERT, NC National Guard, American Red Cross, State Animal Response Team, Division of Public Health, Amateur Radio, Office of Emergency Services, and the NC Highway Patrol were among the 20 organizations and agencies that provided preparedness information, displayed response vehicles, and provided child safety seat demonstrations and information on AMBER Alert throughout the day.